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LETTER DATED 14 NOVEMBER 1996 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to convey to you the attached communication which I have received today from the Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations, Mr. Robert R. Fowler.

I should be grateful if you would bring this communication to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Boutros BOUTROS-GHALI

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Annex

Letter dated 14 November 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The humanitarian situation in eastern Zaire continues to deteriorate. In particular, the plight of refugees and displaced persons in that region remains desperate while efforts by international humanitarian agencies to reach those in need continue to be impeded. Hundreds of thousands of lives are at risk, with many thousands liable to die in the absence of immediate relief. Action by the international community is required now to avoid a humanitarian catastrophe.

The Security Council in resolution 1078 (1996) urged Member States on an urgent and temporary basis and in cooperation with the Secretary-General and with the Organization of African Unity, to prepare the necessary arrangements, in consultation with the States concerned, to allow the immediate return of humanitarian organizations and the safe delivery of humanitarian aid to displaced persons, refugees and civilians at risk in eastern Zaire, and to help to create the necessary conditions for the voluntary orderly and secure repatriation of refugees. We envisage, as a legal framework for this intervention, a resolution under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations providing for a mandate to act.

To this end, the Prime Minister of Canada and other Canadian authorities have consulted with a number of Governments, including those in the region. In our judgement, the international will now exists for the formation of a multinational operation. The Government of Canada is prepared to work without delay with other Governments to enable the deployment of a temporary humanitarian operation for eastern Zaire. We have secured the agreement of a number of Member States to participate in such an operation. We are also in contact with the Organization of African Unity. Canada would be ready to take the lead in organizing and commanding such an operation. The objectives assigned to that operation would be consistent with the ones outlined in resolution 1078 (1996), as stated in the preceding paragraph. These are humanitarian objectives, which are not intended to interfere with the balance of military forces in the area or to support the re-establishment of camps in which armed elements are able to operate.

As we see it, this temporary humanitarian operation should terminate on 31 March 1997, unless the Security Council, on the basis of a report of the Secretary-General, determines that the objectives of the operation have been fulfilled earlier. Within that timeframe, and as soon as possible, the Security Council should authorize the deployment of a follow-up operation on the basis of recommendations by the Secretary-General. This would succeed the temporary multinational force. In this regard, we believe it would be appropriate for you to send an advance team to eastern Zaire with the purpose of reporting to you on the requirements for this follow-up operation and for the transition from the multinational force.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Robert R. FOWLER
Ambassador
Permanent Representative